



A Proposal for Re-Ordering

Holy Trinity Church Plaistow, West Sussex



Holy Trinity, Plaistow

March 2024

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What is meant by Re-ordering?

Re-ordering refers to the rearrangement and adaption of churches to accommodate changes in religious practices such as different kinds of services aimed at supporting more diverse communities. This is occurring in many churches across the UK that need to update their buildings so as to become more functional. More recently the term has been used to describe the introduction of secular uses in under-used church buildings, while retaining their primary purpose as places of worship.

Background and History of Holy Trinity, Plaistow

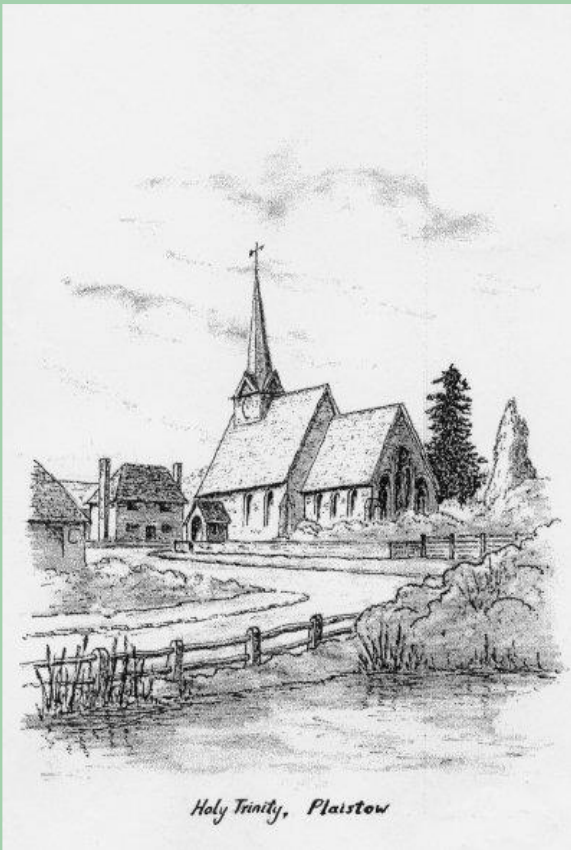
Holy Trinity Church forms a delightful centrepiece to the village of Plaistow, in West Sussex, located at the junction of roads from Kirdford, Loxwood, Haslemere and Dunsfold, and close to the village school, the Winterton Hall and the village green. It is a small chapel constructed in the mid 19th Century.

For historical reasons the church is quite simple, lacking basic amenities as well as comfort. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) plans to enhance the church in these respects and is now ready to reach out to the church membership as well as the community of Plaistow and the surrounding area, to seek views on the proposed enhancement work and to elicit interest in financial support for the improvements.



The village of Plaistow was a chapelry of the nearby village of Kirdford in the Middle Ages. The Sharpe Collection drawing of 1805 shows a small half-timbered chapel structure with a small belfry (similar to the former church at Loxwood) in the forest area of Sussex near the Surrey border. The date of this chapel, known as St. Thomas' Church, is uncertain, as the detail is domestic in nature and does not appear to be pre-Reformation. However, by 1520 a chapel existed and the most likely time for its building would have been during the upsurge of prosperity in the latter part of the 15th century. This chapel was replaced in the 13th Century Gothic Style, at a cost of £1,500 by J Butler of Chichester between 1851-54, after his understanding of the style had been transformed by his collaboration with RC Carpenter in Chichester.

Built of weathered local sandstone, Holy Trinity church has a simple rectangular nave and relatively long chancel, and a wooden belfry with a slender spirelet. The Horsham slabs on the south porch could have come from the original chapel. The east window is a triplet of lancets with single ones elsewhere except at the west end, which has simple geometric tracery. On the chancel arch are foliage corbels and the elaborate chancel roof has curved braces rising from low-set corbels in the walls. The nave roof is simpler with arch-braces. There are no internal columns or transepts, and no internal rooms of any nature.



Holy Trinity is, strictly speaking, a Chapel of Ease to St. John the Baptist in Kirdford. Some modifications were made in 1882. The clock was erected in 1887 (and electrified 100 years later!), followed by a single bell installed in 1909. Internally the altar rails, with twisted balusters, date back to the late 17th century. They were probably transferred from the former chapel. The font is octagonal 19th century with a quatrefoil on each side of the bowl. The fine east window glass is by C E Kempe, 1897. The nave windows on the north and south are by J Powell and Sons, designed by William Miller in 1915 and the west window

is by Kempe and Co, 1912. The pews are rustic and certainly pre-19th century, though hard to date.



Why Re-order Holy Trinity Plaistow?

Primarily our church building is a place of worship, and we wish it to remain as such. Nevertheless, alongside traditional services, funerals and occasional marriages, we would like to be able to develop services and activities where people of all ages can explore and grow in their Christian faith. This means that the building must be one that is able to accommodate the needs of all ages, namely a more adaptable space which can provide warmth, toilets and refreshments.

Importantly, in addition to providing a comfortable and inviting space for Christian worship, the church wants to remain open and become more welcoming to any, of all beliefs or none, who might need a place to seek refuge and support. Holy Trinity will be better suited to this role if improved facilities are available in which casual visitors, as well as church-goers, are made to feel more at ease in the peace and stillness of our church. We know that people come into Holy Trinity as a quiet place to think, reflect, pray, or just be still and we want this to continue but we want it to be a much more welcoming space where the surroundings can show the warmth of welcome for all in a variety of ways, whether that is to drop in for a coffee and chat, a discussion group, a quiet moment or a holiday club/other event for children and families.

Holy Trinity was built for local people to have a place of worship they could easily reach and we want our building to continue to be a presence in the village for everyone - parish residents or visitors.

The PCC also believes that as a complementary facility to the Winterton Hall, more general and public use could be made of the church building, for example as an additional location in Plaistow for holding village events such as music concerts, theatre and movie nights. We would also welcome our school being able to make greater use of the building. However, for historical reasons and as previously alluded to, the church is lacking in the simple amenities which are now expected by those visiting public buildings – mainly, but not exclusively, toilet facilities. These omissions make the building currently unsuitable for hosting events other than short religious services.

The re-ordering of Holy Trinity has been a subject for discussion for many years and in 2019 the PCC decided to move ahead with the project, holding an event to start the fund-raising campaign which was extremely well supported by the local community. Regrettably two significant events occurred shortly thereafter, impeding the progress of this work. The untimely death of our parish priest, Pauline Lucas, who was the main driving force behind the re-ordering project, brought the process to a temporary stop, followed by the Covid pandemic, which caused the complete cessation of all activity for many months.

Now that a degree of normality has returned, the re-ordering project is back into full swing. Making use of some of the funds raised during 2019, the PCC has been able to appoint a church architect to work up plans and prepare details. These have been presented to the Diocesan Advisory Committee – the body that oversees the development of church buildings – who are supportive in principle with the proposals, and we have reached the stage where these can be presented to the Church membership and the Village community.



Our Proposals



North-west view (architect's impression) showing the proposed annexe

Essential facilities required for more general use of the church are toilets and increased storage. The most significant feature of the proposed plan is the construction of a small annexe building on the north-west corner of the existing nave, connecting into the nave through a doorway cut through the external north wall, which will house accessible toilets as well as storage areas.

Inside the nave, a small kitchen will be installed at the south-west corner, to improve the facilities for catering and hospitality.



Interior of the church (architect's impression) looking west

The entrance porch on the south wall will be fully enclosed, to make it weathertight, with a new external door.

Improvements will be made to the heating and lighting in the building. New flooring will be laid, and new furnishings will be provided for increased comfort and flexibility of use.



Cut away view (architect's impression) of the proposed west end of the church

You are most welcome to visit the church, where larger images of the proposals are available, to appreciate more fully the scope of the proposed improvements.

The PCC is firmly committed to these improvements and believes that without such important steps the future viability and sustainability of this beautiful small country church is in question.

The project provides an opportunity to make a gift in memory of a loved one or for other personal reasons, in which case - and subject to the donor's wishes - this may be mentioned in a Donors Book which will be kept in the re-ordered church building.

Budget

The PCC has set a budget of £400,000 for the delivery of the extension and the improvements. Although some financial support in the way of grants and subventions may be available from external sources, most of these would be in the form of matching grants which will depend on our own fund raising, and so local contributions will be essential if we are to realise our dream.

How You Can Help

The PCC is seeking help from the local communities in two ways.

Firstly, we are asking for views and comments on the proposals. Hopefully these will be positive and constructive. Encouragement from outside the church membership will be particularly welcome and will assist us in obtaining the unqualified support from the Diocesan administration.

Secondly, we are seeking the financial support required to give us the resources and confidence needed to press ahead with our plans. Our intention is to create a facility that will be useful for many years to come, not only for public worship and church ceremonial occasions, but also for the community at large to be able to use for events requiring a welcoming, safe space for a diversity of activities.

Your generous financial contributions or pledges, whatever they may be and however they may be offered, will be received with huge and sincere gratitude. The names of contributors will be included in the Donors' Book, unless the donor wishes to remain anonymous.

If you are able to do so, please take some time to visit the church to view the proposals in context and to obtain a better understanding of what is planned. Your comments on the scheme may be included on the attached form, where you may also offer to support the cost of its implementation, in the form of a pledge. Alternatively, comments and suggestions or other messages may be sent to the PCC by email to the address: reorderinghttp@gmail.com, or by post to the PCC Secretary, Chase House, The Drive, Ifold, RH14 0TD.

Please note that all personal information and data submitted will be kept strictly confidential, and any memorial notice will be discussed and agreed with the donor before being made public.

The Proposed Re-ordering of Holy Trinity Church, Plaistow, West Sussex

I/we have the following comments/suggestions regarding the PCC's plans for the re-ordering of Holy Trinity Church. (Please continue overleaf if more space is required)

I/we wish to contribute towards the cost of the implementation of the plans, in the form of:

1. A lump sum gift of £

2. A monthly/annual donation of £ paid by Standing Order

If the donor is a taxpayer and would like the PCC to recover Gift Aid on this donation, please check this box, and we will send a Gift Aid form.

3. Any other form of contribution:

My/our gift is in memory of/in recognition of:

Name:
Address:

Tel:
Email address:

You may drop the completed form in the box provided in the church, or submit a copy by email to: reorderinghtp@gmail.com
All personal information provided on this form will be maintained in strict confidence.

The Parochial Church Council will contact the person completing the form privately to discuss matters raised (if necessary) and methods of payment, etc.

Space for additional comments/suggestions